

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 07581 251134Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 ICAE-00
CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01
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O R 251035Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2328
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
COMSIXTHFLT
DIA
AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMCONSUL GENOA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES
AMCONSUL PALERMO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
SHAPEUSNR
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY
USDOCOSOUTH
USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
AFOSI DIST 65 ROME IT/IVOA
HQ AFOSI WASHDC/IVOAD
USUN NEW YORK 3311

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT,IT
SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL PARTIES LABEL PRISONER EXCHANGE
UNACCEPTABLE

REF: ROME 7532
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1. THE RESPONSE TO THE LATEST ULTAMATUM OF THE RED BRIGADES(RB)
WAS IMMEDIATE AND UNIFORM. CONFRONTED WITH THE APRIL 24 DEMAND
THAT 13 JAILED TERRORISTS BE RELEASED IMMEDIATELY IN EXCHANGE FOR
MORO'SHWIFE, THE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL PARTIES UNANIAMOUSLY
REJECTED AS TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE ANY SUCH EXCHANGE. IN ORDER TO
UNDERLINE THEIR RESOLVE, BOTH THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC (DC) PARTY

AND THE GOVERNMENT DECLINED TO CONVENE EMERGENCY MEETINGS. POLITICAL LEADERS AND GOVERNMENT SPOKESMEN ALIKE SAID THAT THE RB REJECTION OF "HUMANITARIAN NEGOTIATIONS" FOR MORO'S RELEASE MEANT THAT THERE WAS NOTHING MORE TO DISCUSS.

2. ALTHOUGH THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS WAS NOT CONVENED, THE GOVERNMENT FOUND IT NECESSARY TO PROVIDE A FORMAL REPLY TO THE LATEST TERRORIST DEMAND. THIS IT DID IN THE FORM OF A BRIEF STATEMENT RELEASED AT THE CONCLUSION OF A MEETING OF THE INTER-MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE FOR SECURITY (CEFIS) WHICH PRIME MINISTER ANDREOTTI CHAIRED. THE GOVERNMENT STATEMENT ASSERTED THAT THE KIDNAPPERS HAD YET TO SHOW ANY REAL INTENTION TO NEGOTIATE MORO'S RELEASE, NOTING THAT THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF ENGAGING IN A PRISONER EXCHANGE WAS WELL KNOWN. THE STATEMENT CONCLUDED THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION FULLY CONFORMED TO THAT EXPRESSED BY PARLIAMENT.

3. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF LOTTA CONTINUA, A FAR-LEFT GROUP WHICH HAS ARGUED IN FAVOR OF A PRISONER EXCHANGE, THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION IS SUPPORTED BY THE ENTIRE POLITICAL SPECTRUM--FROM THE EXTREME-LEFT PDUP TO THE NEO-FASCIST MSI. AS EVIDENCED BY L'UNITA, THE COMMUNISTS REGARD THE LATEST RB MESSAGE AS HAVING SIGNED MORO'S DEATH WARRANT AND CALLED ON THE "MASSES" TO CELEBRATE THE APRIL 25 LIBERATION DAY HOLIDAY BY REFUTING "THE NEW FASCISM".

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4. LATE ON APRIL 24, A NEW AND EMOTIONALLY CHARGED HANDWRITTEN LETTER FROM MORO WAS RECEIVED BY A ROME EVENING NEWSPAPER. JUDGED TO BE AUTHENTIC, THE LETTER IS ADDRESSED TO PARTY SECRETARY ZACCAGNINI. IN IT, MORO STATES THAT "WE ARE ALMOST AT THE LAST HOUR, SECONDS RATHER THAN MINUTES REMAIN IN THE COUNTDOWN. WE ARE AT THE MOMENT OF THE SLAUGHTER." IMPLORING ZACCAGNINI AND DC LEADERS TO ENGAGE IN AN ACT OF COURAGE, MORO APPEALS FOR HIS LIFE IN TERMS THAT BOTH THE DC JOURNAL POPOLO AND PCI'S L'UNITA DESCRIBED AS OBVIOUSLY "EXTORTED." MORO STATES THAT "NO POLITICAL OR MORAL REASONING" CAN MAKE HIM ACCEPT THAT DC'S "UNFAIR AND UNGRATEFUL SENTENCE;" HE WILL NOT ABSOLVE AND WILL NOT JUSTIFY ANYONE. HE CONCLUDES BY ASKING THAT NO GOVERNMENT OR PARTY OFFICIALS ATTEND HIS FUNERAL ("FOR REASONS OF EVIDENT INCOMPATIBILITY") SINCE HE WISHES "TO BE FOLLOWED BY THE FEW PERSONS WHO TRULY CARED FOR ME AND ARE THEREBY WORTHY TO ACCOMPY ME WITH THEIR LOVE AND PRAYERS." WHILE MORO'S LATEST MESSAGE MUST CERTAINLY HAVE HAD A CRUSHING EFFECT ON DC LEADERS, PARTY OFFICIALS APPEAR HINDLED IN THEIR DECISION NOT TO ENGAGE IN A PRISONER EXCHANGE. GARNER

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